

The Distinction between Chaucer and Shakespeare's Rendition of Their Troilus and Criseyde (Cressida)

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Abstract – This study analyses the distinction between Chaucer's poem entitled *Troilus and Criseyde* and Shakespeare's play entitled *Troilus and Cressida* using three-phase descriptive qualitative method. This study is supported by formalistic theory and feministic theory. The findings from the analysis of data show that the authors' characterization results to distinct bearing of the select characters, the authors' technique upshots to dissimilar style and structure in writing, and the authors' women character portrayal results to different feminine insight, yet create understanding in relation to their respective period. This research further reveals that Shakespeare's version has more complex characters compared to Chaucer's. Moreover, it has been found that Shakespeare's version is a play that is divided into five acts and is written in black verse with twenty-five characters; whereas Chaucer's version is an epic poem that is divided into five books and is written in rime royal verse with thirteen characters. Lastly, Shakespeare's version greatly differs in Chaucer's in terms of women character portrayal in relation to their respective epoch: women are somewhat equal to men in Chaucer's time; whereas in Shakespeare's time, women are inferior and subservient to men. Based on the findings, it is concluded that the two masterpieces have distinctions in authors' characterization, technique in writing, and women character portrayal.

Keywords – Characterization, distinction, technique, women characters

INTRODUCTION

Chaucer and Shakespeare are regarded as the remarkable masters in literature. Chaucer is a writer during medieval epoch who reads various works from great authors, and transforms them into a long narrative with poetic aestheticisms [1]; whereas Shakespeare is an eminent writer during Early Modern period who writes popular poems and plays [2]. The two authors write

poems; however, only Shakespeare writes plays. Poems are indeed creative and imaginative works that are based on author's imagination. Play is another genre in literature. Play is an artistic genre that exposes aesthetic qualities that mimic the human experiences and deeds from the milieu [3]. One of the eminent poems of Chaucer is entitled, *Troilus and Criseyde*. The poem recounts the love story between Troilus and Criseyde; Shakespeare, on the other hand, borrows the works of Chaucer but presents it with different spice. His less known version of the Chaucer's poem is entitled, *Troilus and Cressida*. Numerous years pass, his masterpiece captures the attention of the critics for its dissimilarity from the primary source. Critics assert that Shakespeare's version is greatly affected by how and where he is raised [4]. Akin to Chaucer's poem, the play's core idea centres on affection and downfall.

This exhaustive research aims to provide another interpretation of the clear-cut differences of the two aforementioned masterpieces. Moreover, this research intends to inspire the literati to delve into the works of Chaucer and Shakespeare for comparison. Additionally, this research targets to make the enthusiasts and critics to revive their love into analysis and evaluation of poetry and play. This study further motivates not only the literature majors but also scholars who search authors with their respective literary works for comparison.

This literary research argues that Chaucer and Shakespeare, both presented the same work but with different character description, style in composing, and women portrayal. The popularity of the two authors is another reason why this study is conceived. Significantly, this comprehensive research is essential because it will give a noteworthy contribution to the field of literary studies that will help educators, students, literati, scholars and critics to further comprehend the distinction of the two authors with their corresponding masterpieces. Literary scholars and researchers are

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assigned to investigate masterpieces in literature, and thus this study will benefit them for it will serve as their references to get more information about the distinction of the two masterpieces regarding characterization, technique and women character portrayal. Literary academics will also benefit on this study for this will serve as an assistance in their teaching regarding Troilus and Criseyde (Cressida) in class discussion. This study will further help literary critics of Chaucer and Shakespeare in providing an in-depth investigation of their respective version.

This detailed comparative analysis uses a theoretical basis to support the said claim. Formalistic theory is used to buttress the investigation regarding authors' characterization, and author's technique in writing. Formalistic approach heavily adheres on an in-depth stage by stage examination to reveal the meaning of the text. A formalist critic ignores the sociological issues and the authors' biography. Schauer [5] declares that a formalist is subjugated with the content of the text. Moreover, in formalism, there is highlighting of literary devices and techniques in decoding the text [6]. In addition to approaches, feministic theory is also used to analyse the authors' women character portrayal. This approach greatly focuses on the "female depiction" that has been disregarded throughout the century, and points out how the male perspective and demeanour affect women as a whole. Fard [7] declares that some critics mainly focus on the influence of gender on literary criticism. Hence, searching what are produced works are essential to further comprehend the women supervision in educational standpoint [8]. In connection with this aim, detailed discourse analyses are employed in order to arrive on the essential results.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Numerous critics have already generated studies for several decades pass regarding Chaucer's poem Troilus and Criseyde and Shakespeare's play rendition of it. The related literature and studies include on-line articles, journals, theses, and dissertations that focus on the distinction of the two masterpieces.

On an exploratory qualitative research that is made by Fang [9], she asserts that the verses of the poem disclose intricacy of Chaucer's artwork. She goes on elaborating that Chaucer's poem is more reputable than Shakespeare's representation of characters. Furthermore, Wightman [10] concludes that Shakespeare's play is unreliable due to delineation of discrepancy of the former version. In fact, Chaucer's poem presents sentimentalities; whereas Shakespeare's version portrays robust and genuine nature [9]. On detailed critical

analysis, Shurgill [4] infers that Shakespeare's rendition is filled with exciting, dramatic scenarios; whereas Chaucer's poem is dependent on truth in delivering the incidents in his poem. However, Pappas [11], on her discourse analysis of the characters, claims that Shakespeare's play is a representation of realistic events based on the chaos and affection as the core ideas. Consequently, as literary critique progresses, Shakespeare's play gradually alters due to the amendment by some critics as shown in the compilation of works in criticism to literature [12].

Critics have made comprehensive study in both the characters in Chaucer and Shakespeare. On a profound examination of characters in Chaucer's poem, Capelovitch [13] asserts that Criseyde is a victim of aggression (as opposite to what some enthusiasts say "traitor") and seduction of the surrounding men. Diomedes, a suitor of Criseyde in a Greek camp, is seen as a major proponent of seduction. On a qualitative research regarding Troilus of Chaucer and Shakespeare, Flessor [14] declares that the work of the two writers is both gloomy and tragic due to the descending paths of the protagonist. Moreover, Janz [15] posits that the play of Shakespeare ends with a commonplace story arc concerning two warriors battling for affection of woman. In fact, Shakespeare's play presents complexity regarding sexuality not only for the readers and scholars, but also for the live audiences. Gregory goes on explaining that the audience craves for sexual desires in Shakespeare's play due to the erotic representation of characters [16]. According to Brown [12], Shakespeare's play, perhaps, alters the insight regarding sexual category. Chaucer and Shakespeare indeed present the same masterpieces but with diverse world views. On a related note, critics see the two masterpieces as the representation on sociological aspects of the authors' era [4].

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aims to identify the differences between Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde and Shakespeare's play rendition of Chaucer's poem. Specifically, it focuses on the distinction of the authors' characterization, authors' technique in writing, and authors' women character portrayal.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This literary research uses a three-phase qualitative method using the discourse content analysis. Specifically, this discourse uses the formalistic theory, and feministic theory in investigating the distinction of the two literary masterpieces. The select characters, the

technique in writing, and the women character portrayal will be explored using the said method. Further, most of the relevant information have been taken from the book of Chaucer Troilus and Criseyde in PDF and the play version of Shakespeare that is edited by John S. P Tatlock in PDF. Aside from books, needed information is also taken from internet or on-line articles and journals which are used in the discussion of different conceptions in the literary field. In addition to sources, published and unpublished researches are also used to deepen and strengthen the firmness of this study. In fact, this study deals with authors' characterization, technique in writing and women character portrayal. These three sub-topics are divided accordingly using phases. Phase one adheres on the characterization scrutiny, phase two is on technique analysis, and phase three is on women character portrayal examination.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The distinction of the two masterpieces regarding authors' characterization, technique in writing and women character portrayal are as follows:

(1) Distinction of Characterization

A. Chaucer and Shakespeare's Troilus

Both Chaucer and Shakespeare have Troilus as one of the characters in their masterpieces. Both Troilus are desperately attracted to Criseyde (Cressida). In Chaucer's poem, Troilus is viewed as passive, unexperienced and puzzled of love [17]. He allows himself to be dictated by other people. His baffled and passive bearing is evident as the sequence of event progresses. Pappas [11] goes on elaborating that Troilus portrays his inactiveness by not going into battleground right away after Criseyde's leaving; his deeds during that time is to go in Criseyde's house to check if she is around, and compose letters to find out the reason why she never fulfils her promise to come back. Chaucer's Troilus is also dependent to Pandarus, uncle of Criseyde, about his hidden feelings towards Criseyde [4]. This is extremely explicit in the text when Pandarus volunteers himself to be the bridge of their love affair, and wants to counsel him about his woe:

Ye, Troilus, now herke, quod Pandare;
Though I be nyce, it happeth often so
That oon that excesse doth ful yuele fare
By good counseil kan kepe his frend ther-fro.
I haue my self ek seyn a blynd man goo
Ther as he fel that couthe loken wide;
A fool may ek a wis man ofte gide [18].

Despite of Troilus naive demeanour, he is celebrated as honourable and chivalrous man. This is apparent when he gets ready to go to Greece to fight Diomedes, lover and protector of Criseyde in Greece. In fact, he receives the most sympathy by the critics because of his nobleness and idealistic deeds. Another reason why critics sympathize more of Chaucer's Troilus is that there were no marks of doubt that he never loved Criseyde and the hearth-breaking death at the end of the poem [11].

Shakespeare's Troilus differs in Chaucer in terms of emotion. Shakespeare's Troilus hardly shows emotion. Nevertheless, Shakespeare's Troilus shows a genuine and logical ability in delivering a speech [11]. In Shakespeare's version, Troilus sees women as purely things to be swapped for worldly pleasure [14]. According to Pappas [11] that there is only little difference in Chaucer's Troilus, and that is enhanced in "sensuality." Shakespeare presents his Troilus with full of "craving" that lucidly displays what Cressida means to him and that is a seductive woman to be brought in bed [14]. Troilus goes on saying in Pandarus's house: "Trouble him not; to bed, to bed: sleep kill those pretty eyes" [19]. This dialogue from the play shows how Troilus desires for sex. He is attracted with Cressida's appearance and eager to win her.

B. Chaucer and Shakespeare's Criseyde (Cressida)

Chaucer's Criseyde shows strands of disloyalty. Joss asserts that Criseyde surrenders herself to Diomedes, a Greek soldier who agrees to protect Criseyde in the Greek camp [17]. Her unfaithfulness is one of her weak characterization. However, according to critics that Criseyde must not be blamed of everything. Troilus must also be questioned about his fickleness. Pappas [11] declares that the jealous behaviour of Troilus pushes Criseyde not to return in Troy; another reason why Criseyde portrays a betrayal bearing is that she is anxious that Troilus, perhaps, publicises their relationship to people that violates the courtly canon of secrecy by narrating his dream to Cassandra. On the other hand, Capelovitch [13] claims that Criseyde is just a victim of seduction of the surrounding men. Diomedes, however, is deemed as the unethical man who uses his position and characteristics to get the interest of Criseyde. In addition to the shortcoming of Criseyde's character is immaturity. Her immature mind also adds on her betrayal; thus, she is having a hard time making the right decision. Her indecisiveness is considered weakness on her character; however, her alteration of heart was due to her emotional naivety, and to the war between the Trojans and the

Greeks. That is why, critics interpret her as affectionate, admirable and righteous woman for this reason: she deems of Troilus not on fleshly manners, but as valuable lover because of his dauntless, wittiness, and mildness actions. Consequently, Hazlit [20] concludes that Shakespeare's Cressida is viewed as untrained; whereas Chaucer's Criseyde is viewed as serious woman. In fact, Shurgill [4] posits that Chaucer is the creator of the poem; however many followers of him produce another works with the same plot development but with different characterization.

Shakespeare, like Chaucer, presents his Cressida basing the epoch's tradition [4]. On a related note, Cressida is viewed by critics like a marionette whose demeanour is influenced by tradition. However, Shakespeare's Cressida is portrayed more complex than Chaucer's Criseyde that is caused by her scheming character [21]. She is ill-informed and unappreciated woman. She also delineates infidelity in love. In fact, critics and scholars call her as "a woman of loose ideals" and "prostitute." This is evident in many scenes of the play. One scene that relates to her endeavour feeling of lust is when she and Troilus meet at Pandarus' house, and she knows what to expect in his visit. Another scene that shows his lustful bearing is the Act 4, Scene V, when she allows herself to be kissed by Patroclus. Patroclus goes on saying: "The first was Manelaus' kiss; this, mine: Patroclus kisses you" [19]. In fact, Pappas [11] mentions the following reasons why critics believe that Cressida shows herself as real prostitute not according to job, but according to characteristics:

First Cressida is a cunning, lustful coquette; then she is Troilus' concubine; third, she is kissed by the Greek generals; and last she is seen as she is about to become Diomedes' bedmate.

This only shows how faithless is Cressida. Unlike Chaucer's Criseyde, Shakespeare makes his Cressida as mature and confident woman. She is verbose in nature. She makes speeches and delivers it without so much hesitation if it is against or perhaps scorn other people. Consequently, Shakespeare presents his Cressida targeting ethics against women as whole.

(2) Distinction of authors' technique in writing their masterpieces

A. Chaucer and Shakespeare's verse in writing their masterpieces

One of the distinctions of the two masterpieces is the usage of verse. Although Shakespeare's version is a play; however, it is written with poem's characterization. Chaucer composes his poem using the rime-royal verse

[22]. His poem has a rhyme scheme of ABABBCC. Moreover, it is made of seven lines per stanza, and is written in iambic pentameter [23], as shown in following lines in Chaucer's book 1:

The double sorwe of Troilus to tellen,
That was the kyng Priamus sone of Troye,
In louynge how his auentures fellen
ffro wo to wele, and after out of ioie,
My purpos is, er that I parte fro ye.
Thesiphone, thow help me for tendite
Thise woful vers that wepen as I write [18].

The poem displays a flowing rhythm. Each stanza in a poem contributes to its overall meaning. It further expresses a dramatic, narrative development of the poem through the usage of evocative lines. Shakespeare, on the other hand, composes his version using blank verse. Blank verse is a poem that is non-rhyming, but has a reliable meter [24]. It is apparent in the play. Shakespeare writes in his play's prologue:

In Troy, there lies the scene. From isle of Greece
The princes orgillous, their high blood chaf'd,
Have to the port of Athens sent their ships
Fraught with the ministers and instruments
Of cruel war. Sixty and nine, that wore
Their crownets regal, from the Athenian bay [19].

The play presents irregularity of lines. Additionally, the play's prologue and dialogue offer verse that presents realistic events in Shakespeare's time. Shakespeare is known best in his usage of blank verse in making his character's dialogues, not only in Troilus and Cressida but most of his well-known plays. Anchored to Chaucer's five-chapter poetic book, Shakespeare's version is written in five acts.

B. Chaucer and Shakespeare's total number of characters

One of the vibrant distinctions of the two masterpieces is the total number of characters. Chaucer's masterpiece, however, has characters because it is written in a verse-narrative style.

Chaucer's poem has thirteen characters. These are including the Trojans and the Greeks main and minor characters. The characters of Chaucer's poem are Achilles, Antenor, Calchas, Criseyde, Diomedes, Helen, Pandarus, Priam, Cassandra, Hector, Troilus, Paris, and Deiphobus. Shakespeare's version, on the other hand, has more than twenty characters. The main and minor characters of his play including the Trojans and the Greeks are Priam, Cassandra, Hector, Troilus, Paris, Deiphobus, Helenus, Margareton, Andromache, Aeneas, Antenor, Calchas, Cressida, Alexander, Pandarus,

Agamemnon, Achilles, Ajax, Diomedes, Nestor, Ulysses, Menealus, Helen, Thersites, and Patroclus [25]. The overall characters in Shakespeare's play are twenty-five. Consequently, he adds twelve characters from Chaucer's poem which has authentically thirteen characters.

(3) Distinction of authors' character women portrayal

A. Women character representation in relation to authors' respective period

Women in society are either celebrated or overpowered. The two writers write their masterpieces in relation to what is currently happening in their society.

Chaucer is raised in chivalrous society. In fact, critics view his poems as reflection of the Courtly Love Code of morals. This code is used as a basis on how courtship should be done between a man and a woman. The founder is citing rules and one of the thirty-one rules that are written in the 12th Century by the Frenchman, Andreas Capellanus is that women are allowed to love two men [26]. The said code becomes the foundation of every lover during this period. Moreover, the said code provides an understanding of women during the medieval period. Consequently, women are given the privilege to choose whom they want to love and are given the right not to accept the love of a suitor. This is evident in the masterpiece of Chaucer in portraying Criseyde: woman that is not deprived of love. Birkan [27] goes on elucidating that the first part of Capellanus book points out that the begging for love to women are the usual thing that men do in order to be acknowledged as a woman's partner. It is essential to deem that it is not Criseyde that begs for love; it is Troilus. This is evident in the numerous instances of the poem. Joss [28] claims that Criseyde is only pushed by Pandarus to mingle with Troilus. In fact, in the scenario of swapping of letters, she is hesitant whether to write back to Troilus or not. By analysing Criseyde's demeanour, it is theorized by critics that women have gain little power against the male-dominated society via following the Courtly Love code during Chaucer's time.

Shakespeare is born in a male-dominated society. During his time, akin to Chaucer's period, people are influenced by the tradition of the society. However, the Courtly Love Code in this period is no longer applied because women are overpowered by men. Women during this time are expected to patronize their husband. They need consultation of men before doing any decisions. Women are expected to do the household chores [29]. Furthermore, women during Elizabethan

period are not given the rights to perform in theatres and enter into political affairs [30]. As a whole, men are expected to earn wage for living, while the women are expected to look after their children and do the household jobs. In fact, women in patriarchal society are reflected in Shakespeare's works. Shakespeare, however, presents his women character in his play in a humiliating manner, yet contributes to the plot development. He makes his Cressida a servant of tradition in his version of Chaucer's poem. Moreover, he makes his Cressida, a confident but a seductive woman. In fact, in relation to Shakespeare's time, women's virginity is of high importance for men in choosing a woman to marry. According to critics, women are judged as "prostitute" when they engage in sex or do not stay pure before marriage [31]. This happening mirrors Cressida's characteristics towards the male-dominated society. That is why, critics assert that Shakespeare's Cressida is "a real whore" for several reasons. Even the play's prologue suggests sensual scenario that mirrors Cressida's desiring characteristic: "like, or find fault, do as your pleasures are now good or bad" [19]. This is actually evident in the many scenes of the play when allows herself to be kissed by Greek soldiers. Theory evolves that the patriarchal society makes Shakespeare writes this play giving an unethical demonstration of women. Overall, women during Shakespeare's time are treated with less appreciation and are inferior to men. This is manifested in Shakespeare's composition of Troilus and Cressida, whereas women during Chaucer's time are celebrated and are viewed with almost the same attainment to men [4].

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the thorough investigation, it is concluded that Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde and Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida have distinction in terms of characterization, technique, and women character portrayal. This research further recommends that the (1) analytic arguments in the distinction of characterization be used as a reference in literature classes. This helps the literati and students classify the dissimilarity of the two masterpieces; (2) the detail in the distinction types of verse, and total number of characters be used in elaborating the distinction in terms of authors' technique in writing in literary discussion. This will aid students in recognizing the contrasting structure of the two literary works; and (3) the distinction of women character portrayal in relation to authors' particular period be used in the discussion of societal status of women during the medieval period and Elizabethan period in historical and literary classes. This further helps students and educators

comprehend the relative difference in women delineation of the two masterpieces.

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